

City water wins award

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By Andrew Cummins

After coming in fifth in the competition last year, the Wyoming Association of Rural Water Systems this year recognized the city of Torrington as having the best tasting drinking water in the state.

Mark Pepper, executive director of the association, told the city council during his presentation at Tuesday's regularly scheduled meeting that the city has come a long way to claim the award, and applauded the city for representing the southeastern part of the state so well at the competition.

Torrington Mayor Leroy Schafer said before the council meeting that the city is no longer under any administrative orders from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and said Torrington's public water now "meets and exceeds EPA standards."

In the past, the city has been under administrative orders from the EPA for its water supply having too high of nitrate levels.

Schafer added that the water quality is such that residents don't need to worry about health issues and added that residents shouldn't feel they have to install their own reverse osmosis units.

To get to this point, Water and Wastewater Department Supervisor Tom Troxel and his staff have overseen upgrades to the city's water delivery system, along with the installation of new groundwater wells and a new water treatment facility that started moving water in 2007.

Additionally, Troxel said his department has an annual budget of \$40,000 for sampling and testing of Torrington's water to ensure the supply is in compliance with the EPA's standards.

While those upgrades have left the water department in debt by about \$3.5 million, Schafer said all the improvements stemmed from mandates and the city's push to have exceptional public water.

A representative from the city's water department will travel to Washington, D.C. in early February to represent Torrington's water at the National Rural Water Rally, Pepper said. In addition to competing against the nation's other 49 states during the event, the official will also meet with congressional representatives, he said.

The judging criteria at the state level were clarity, odor and taste of the water, Pepper said.